

Message Text

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42/46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 FEA-02 SR-02 ORM-03 IO-14 AGR-20 HEW-08 *

* EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 INT-08 SCI-06 DRC-01 /192 W

----- 061625

R 211200Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7605

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0126

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARAGRAPH MISNUMBERED ON ORIGINAL)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SU

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR VISITS EQUATORIA PROVINCE

1. SUMMARY. JANUARY 14-18 ;TRIP EQUATORIA REVEALED NUMBER GROWING PAINS IN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUDANESE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN REGIONAL AUTHORITIES. MOST RETURNED REFUGEES APPARENTLY BEING SUCCESSFULLY ABSORBED INTO TRADITIONAL ECONOMY, BUT RETURN MAJOR NUMBER FROM UGANDA IN SPRING LIKELY STRAIN FOOD STOCKS. WHILE REGION HAS CONSIDERABLE LONG-RANGE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL, ENDEMIC HEALTH AND TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS, PLUS IMMEDIATE FUEL SHORTAGES, CLOUD SHORT-TERM OUTLOOK. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCOMPANIED BY SMITH (AF/N) AND EMBOFF PEALE, I PAID FOUR DAY VISIT EQUATORIA PROVINCE JANUARY 14-18. SINCE THIS WAS FIRST VISIT TO SOUTHERN REGIONAL BY US CHIEF OF MISSION SINCE 1967, REGIONAL AUTHORITIES WENT ALL OUT TO PROVIDE CORDIAL RECEPTION AND SHOW US MAXIMUM AMOUNT IN TIME AVAILABLE. IN ADDITION VISITS TORIT, MARIDI, YAMBIO AND NZARA BY PRIVATE PLANE AND DRIVE TO NIMULE BY CAR, WE CALLED ON VICE PRESIDENT ALIER AND MET WITH MOST MEMBERS
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LOCAL CABINET AS WELL AS VOLAG REPS. FOLLOWING ARE GENERAL IMPRESSIONS TRIP WHICH WILL BE SUPPLEMENTED BY OTHER

REPORTING ON SPECIFIC SUBJECTS.

3. POLITICAL: AS WAS TO BE EXPECTED AFTER ORGANIZWCSON PERMANENT HIGH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (E.E. REGIONAL CABINET), EUPHORIA WHICH SURROUNDED CREATION AUTONOMY SOUTHERN REGION HAS BEEN REPLACED BY SOME FEELING OF LET-DOWN. KEY ACT IN THIS PROCESS WAS PRESIDENT NIMEIRI'S NOMINATION OF VICE PRESIDENT ALIER (WHO DID NOT STAND FOR ELECTION TO REGIONAL ASSEMBLY) AS HEAD NEW PERMANENT HEC. WHILE THIS IN FACT DONE BY NIMEIRI IN HIS CAPACITY AS HEAD SSU, IT WAS WIDELY INTERPRETED IN SOUTH AS INDICATION NORTH INTENDS CONTINUE IMPOSE TOP LEADERSHIP. MOST DAMAGING FROM STANDPOINT FUTURE NORTH/SOUTH COLLABORATION WAS ASSERTION ONE NON-CABINET SOURCE THAT SUDANESE EXILES WHO OPPOSE NIMEIRI HAVE CONTACTED SOME SOUTHERNERS WITH INTIMATIONS THEY FAVOR GREATER AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM FROM SOUTHERN REGION THAN AT PRESENT. NO EVIDENCE RESPONSIBLE SOUTHERNERS DESIRE ANYTHING BUT EFFECTIVE WORKING EXISTING AGREEMENT (AS THEY UNDERSTAND IT), BUT PROBLEM REMAINS DUE SOUTHERN HYPER-SUSPICION AND SENSITIVITY OF NORTH AT TIME AUTHORITIES IN KHARTOUM FOCUSING ON ARAB AND OTHER REGIONAL ISSUES.

4. MILITARY: WHILE APPARENTLY SOME NORTHERN TROOPS MAY HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN SINCE HEIGHT TROUBLES, NUMBER SOURCES COMPLAINED THAT NORTHERN TROOPS STILL MUCH IN EVIDENCE ALLEGEDLY IN EXCESS NUMBERS PROVIDED UNDER ADDIS ACCORDS (I.E. 6000 NORTHERN TROOPS AND 6000 SOUTHERN EX-ANYANYA). DESPITE EFFORTS BY REGIONAL AUTHORITIES, MANY NORTHERN UNITS AND SOME EX-ANYANYA TROOPS CONTINUE OCCUPY SCHOOLS AND OTHER FACILITIES BADLY NEEDED FOR EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES. TWO OF MAJOR NORTHERN COMMANDERS IN SOUTH WERE IN PROCESS BEING RELIEVED BY SOUTHERN OFFICERS AND EXPERIMENT REPORTED CURRENTLY UNDER WAY IN YEI INVOLVING INTEGRATION OF NORTH/SOUTH TROOPS AT PLATOON LEVEL. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, INTEGRATION NORTHERN UNITS; WITH ANYANYA APPEARS HAVE MADE LITTLE PROGRESS. ADDITIONALLY, ANYANYA REMAIN MORE*POORLY ARMED AND MEANLY QUARTERED THAN NORTHERN UNITS. THERE IS SOME SOUTHERN FEELING THAT, IF NORTH WERE SINCERE IN DESIR*
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GIVE SOUTH GREATER AUTONOMY, THESE PROBLEMS WOULD HAVE RECEIVED GREATER ATTENTION. HOWEVER IT PROBABLY NOT EASY FOR EVEN NIMEIRI MOVE HIS ARMY AROUND RAPIDLY, NOTABLY TO LESS COMFORTABLE QUARTERS, AGAINST WISHES LOCAL COMMANDERS. MOREOVER, IF HE FEELS THERE IS ANY POSSIBLY EXILE EXPLOITATION NORTH/SOUTH DIFFERENCES, HE MAY REGARD CONTINUED PRESENCE NORTHERN UNITS AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED AS ESSENTIAL.

5. AS FURTHER POSSIBLE AVENUE CIRCUMVENT ADDIS ABABA AGREEMENT, SOUTHERNERS NOTE THAT THERE IS NO RPT NO

REGIONAL SSU POLITBUREAU. SINCE SSU THEORETICALLY IS THE KEY ELEMENT IN ORDAINING AND DIRECTING SUDANESE POLICIES, FACT THAT CHAIN OF COMMAND IN SSU IS FROM JUBA COMMISSIONER TO SSU POLIT*UREAU KHA*TOUM IS SOMEWHAT GALLING, EVEN THOUGH FIVE MEMBERS REGIONAL HEC ARE ALSO POLITBUREAU MEMBERS.

6. INTEGRATION: WHILE SOUTHERN SUSPICIONS THUS HARDLY DEAD, REGIONAL MINISTRIES BEGINNING FUNCTION NORMALLY WITHIN ACCEPTED CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. ADDIS AGREEMENT TECHNICALLY PART SUDANESE CONSTITUTION, BUT REGIONAL MIN ADMIN/LEGAL AFFAIRS OLWAK (A LAWYER) TOLD ME THAT ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CENTRAL CONSTITUTION AND REGIONAL CONSTITUTION WOULD BE RESOLVED ON BASIS POLITICAL, NOT LEGAL, DECISIONS. THIS UNDERLINES IMPORTANCE IN MAKING SYSTEM WORK OF INTER-PLAY KEY PERSONALITIES, NOTABLY NIMEIRI AND ALIER. ON BASIS BRIEF MEETIN, LATTER SEEMS SELF-CONTAINED, QUIET AND UNLIKELY MAKE DIFFICULTIES FOR KHARTOUM.

7. ONE ASPECT INTEGRATION IS FACT THAT LOCAL COMMERCE IN SOUTH REMAINS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN HANDS NORTHERN TRADERS. WHILE SUDANESE COMMERCIAL LAW THEORETICALLY RULES OUT DISCRIMINATION AS BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS, OLWAK INDICATED ALL HE ABLE DO IS ADVISE HIS COLLEAGUES THAT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NORTHERNERS SHOULD BE KEPT TO MINIMUM. IN PRACTICE, I WOULD ASSUME DESPERATE SOUTHERN NEED FOR EXPERIENCED MERCHANTS AND ABSENCE TRAINED *OUTHERNE * LIKELY ASSURE CONTINUING ROLE NORTHERN TRADERS FOR CONSIDERABLE PERIOD, BUT THERE WILL BE FRICTIONS.

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8. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. DIFFICULTIES DUE SOUTHERN REGION'S ENDEMIC INTERNAL TRANSPORT PROBLEMS AND REMOTENESS FROM PORT FACILITIES HAVE BEEN COMPLICATED BY CURRENT FUEL SHORTAGES. NUMBER FACTORIES AND WATER DISTRIBUTION SCHEMES NOT FUNCTIONING DUE ABSENCE DIESEL FOR GENERATORS. UNHCR AND VOLAGS HAVE OVER PAST YEAR OBTAINED SOME SUCH FUEL VIA UGANDA BUT LATTER REPORTEDLY NOW PERMITTING NO FUEL WHICH ENTERS UGANDA TO LEAVE. EFFORTS MAY BE MADE VIA KHARTOUM DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS OBTAIN FUEL ZAIRE, UGANDA OR KENYA, BUT OUTLOOK HIGHLY UNCERTAIN.

9. REFUGEES: BULK REFUGEES HAVE RETURNED AND APPARENTLY BEING SUCCESSFULLY RE-ABSORBED IN REGIONAL LIFE. HOWEVER, THERE STILL LARGE NUMBER UGANDA, VARIOUSLY ESTIMATED FROM 30-50,000, MANY WHOM EXPECTED RETURN THIS SPRING. COMMISSIONER GENERAL REFUGEE RELIEF M'BORO ASSERTED FY 74 PL 480 PROGRAM VOLAGS WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT MEET NEED. DETAILS THIS QUESTION SUBJECT SEPARATE MESSAGE.

10. COMMENT: SOUTHER REGION IMPRESSES INITIAL VISITOR
AS HAVING CONSIDERABLE AGRICULTURAL AND EVEN HYDRO-ELECTRIC
POSSIBILITIES. AREA'S CHIEF DRAWBACKS ARE ITS ENDEMIC
HEALTH PROBLEMS (MALARIA, SLEEPING SICKNESS, INTESTINAL
DISORDERS), FUEL SHORTAGES AND CONTINUED TRANSPORT
DIFFICULTIES. WHILE PRESIDENT NIMEIRI REMAINS POPULAR AS
SYMBOL ACHIEVEMENT REGIONAL'S AUTONOMY, HIS LUSTER HAS BEEN
DIMMED BY DEVELOPMENTS NOTED. AT SAME TIME, BELIEVE
THIS SITUATION SHOULD BE REGARDED MORE IN NATURE GROWING
PAINS IN EVOLUTION PERMANENT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CENTRAL
AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES THAN ASOTARBINGER MAJOR STORM
CLOUDS AHEAD.
BREWER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, ARMED FORCES, HEALTH, TRANSPORTATION, POLITICAL STABILITY, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, MILITARY TRAINING, CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, DISCRIMINATION, DESEGREGATION, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, VISITS, ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, DISEASES, PETROLEUM RESERVES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974KHARTO00126
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740128/aaaabado.tel
Line Count: 183
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 SEP 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <10 DEC 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR VISITS EQUATORIA PROVINCE
TAGS: PFOR, ECON, SU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005